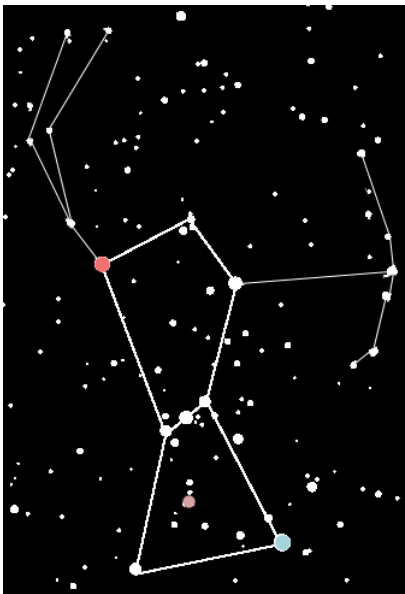


January 2009

## Night Sky

### Orion ~ The Great Hunter

One of the most prominent constellations in the winter sky is Orion, the great hunter. He stands in the sky with his shield and club raised, ready to hunt. Some stories say he is hunting Taurus, a constellation in front of him. Some say he was immortalized in the sky after being stung by Scorpius, the scorpion, or accidentally shot by his lover. Most stories agree that two nearby constellations, Canis Major and Canis Minor, are his canine hunting companions.



To locate Orion, look southwest. Search for three stars that are close together in a straight line. These are the stars of Orion's belt. Above these three stars are his shoulders. These stars are named Bellatrix and Betelgeuse. If you look out past each of these stars, you can locate one arm holding a club above his head and the second arm holding a shield even with his shoulders. If you go back to Orion's

belt, you can locate his legs or knees. One of these stars is very bright and named Rigel. The other is less obvious, but can be easily seen. Next time you find yourself out after dark on a clear night, look to the southwest and see if you can find this legendary hunter.

**Visit the Information Desk for program information.**

## Sky Surprises

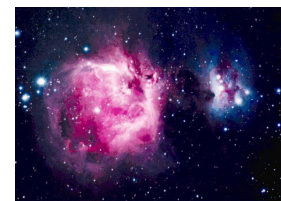
Many constellations are visible without any special equipment. People have been observing the



stars, creating patterns, and telling stories about them for thousands of years.

A dark sky and a decent pair of binoculars can enhance your star gazing experience. If you're going to get really serious, get your hands on a telescope to see the details you can't catch with your unaided eye.

Hanging off of Orion's belt is his sword. Hidden in the middle of the sword is the Orion nebula, a cluster of interstellar gas and dust. It will look like a fuzzy spot in the sky when viewed with binoculars.



An image of the Orion nebula.